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THE  
HISTORY  
OF THE  
SPANISH INVASION,  
AND THE  
ARMADA  
STYLED  
*INVINCIBLE.*

TRANSLATED FROM THE LATIN OF  
GROTIUS.

"Quis Parthum paret? quis gelidum Scythen?  
Quis Germania quos horrida parturit  
Fetus, incolumi Cæsare? quis fere  
Bellum curret Iberiae?"

"Repudianda, infido cum hoste, colloquia, et qualicunque passione,  
Natus bellum."

"Arcanumque magnum patefactum est, posse Gallos sub tyranno esse,  
Non posse sub Bourbono."

"Discat tyranus, serviendo minuit ipsorum."

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## EPISTLE DEDICATORY.

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TO

THE HON. WILLIAM CORNWALLIS,

Admiral of the Blue Squadron of his Majesty's Fleet, Rear  
Admiral of England, and commanding the blockading  
Fleet off Brest.

SIR,

PERMIT a great admirer of the astonishing fortitude and perseverance you, with your noble fleet, have shewn, through a winter of unexampled tempestuousness and storms, to grace his translation of the history of a most momentous event, (similar to the one his Majesty's fleets are now, under the beneficent protection of the Almighty, staying from these menaced islands), with the application to you, of the remarks herein made by the historian, on the just celebrity of the great Admiral Sir Francis Drake : " *Illustris hic maritimis victoriis, quas toto orbe circumtulerat, et*

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dignissimus, cuius manus, isto in periculo, patria respiceret !"

That you may be long preserved to experience  
the gratitude of a grateful nation, is the earnest  
hope of,

SIR,

Your very obedient humble servant,

THE TRANSLATOR.

THE  
HISTORY,  
&c.

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THERE was a calculation of astrologers, that the year 1588 would produce the termination of all human affairs: one portion of the testimonies of heavenly punishment will no doubt have been, that immense fleet of Spain, which, with equal hope and anger, was in a state of active preparation, whilst peace with Turkey and France subsisted.

Nor was it enough, that the Spaniards, the conquerors of so many kingdoms and of the new world, were so long aiming at the recovery of a small nation to their dominion, in which both Spain and the United Provinces suffered severely: it was reserved for a woman to add to their disgrace.

The Dutch, in their warfare, relied on the English; the English, in theirs, on the defence the sea afforded them; as though the names of the Saxons, Danes, and Normans, might be unknown to that point, or that whatever power shall have in-

vaded England, did not succeed in obtaining possession of the island: for the kings of it, fearful of internal commotion, by the demolition of the fortifications, have exposed England to attacks from without: moreover, the bodies and minds of the nation at large, weakened by a long peace and luxury, without generals, without cavalry—what are they, opposed to the strength of Spain, and to those who for so many years conquered under the Prince of Parma?

Already, according to the custom of human ambition, actuated by the hope of going on to further acquisitions, they had arrogated to themselves the future possession of the devoted kingdoms of Scotland and Denmark: afterwards they proposed to avail themselves of the English power and innate hatred against France, at that time deluged with its own blood.

The remaining parts of Europe, distracted and divided into so many governments, which would never heartily and with good faith combine, all access by sea being closed, would then afford an easy prey.

Those who formed more moderate estimates, did not promise to themselves such great things; but even these thought it of importance to try the fortune of the sea against the maritime nations, to carry great and uncertain terror far and wide, to confine the pirate opportunely in his lurking-places, and to plunder and destroy commerce.

The Roman Pontiff, Sixtus the Fifth, also endeavoured, by the agency of the Spaniard, to recover England to his spiritual laws, which the simplicity of former kings had rendered tributary to the Tiara: emulous therefore of the example of ancient pontiffs, who, from the dissensions of princes, had first usurped a jurisdiction in kingdoms, afterwards over kings themselves, he sanctified the conquest of England, alleging that it was oppressed by Elizabeth, who possessed no right to the crown, and solely retained her dominion by the executions of the nobility and the terror of the people; superadding also a religious crime, proceeding from a defect in her birth, as one born in adultery, which she in vain laboured to veil over with the name of a marriage.

These and many other topics of vituperation were fulminated against the Queen in the Pope's bull, earnestly at the same time inviting all men to assist the expedition, releasing the English from their oath of allegiance to her, and exhorting them to deliver her up alive; but, if that could not be effected, killed.

Moreover, as a reward for the perpetration of this crime, he added impunity for all crimes, even with the Almighty, and other mockeries of this sort, which indeed had not been promulgated in rude and uncultivated ages, without producing terrible effects, but were now only given as empty menaces, and were received as such.

It appears to have been believed, that many of the leading men in England but ill bore the present government, whose affection and bias for the Spanish government was affirmed and communicated by the idle garrulity of Bernard Mendoza, who, under the name of ambassador, had, for years past, been the spy at the court of England: but what was the fact was, that however great the differences were on religious points, there was scarcely one man so imprudent, as to rely on a foreign intervention and foreign conquest for the favourable settlement of these disensions.

Through all the coasts of Spain and of that part of Italy which was subject to Spanish rule, about twenty thousand men are equipped, one hundred and forty ships, the greater part of them of an incredible size, which itself indeed contributed to their destruction. Among these there were many galleons, raised with towers and decks, like castles and cities, which were impelled by three hundred oars, covered against darts, with the holds strengthened, in order that they might better support the violence of the waves; sailors hired from all nations, provisions for six months, an immense treasure, then usual in a land war, and twenty-five hundred pieces of ordnance and other implements of war to cast stones and darts with.

And all this preparation, the work of many

years, was announced to Europe in publications, to induce terror and for ostentation sake, it being sufficiently evident, that this was intended as a demonstration of Spanish opulence and power.

A declaration of war in usual form by the heralds, although advised by some, was yet not grateful to others, to whom the opinion of the Sovereign Pontiff imparted sufficient authority.

Nor was the salutary advice of the Marquis of Santa Cruz and of the Prince of Parma approved, that the first care should be to obtain possession of a Dutch sea-port, as those of Flanders were not able to afford any shelter to the fleet, in case of disasters, either of the sea or war.

To very many, delay in the pursuit of victory appeared the preferable mode, and that the army should not be landed immediately near the Thames for the assault on London.

The Duke of Medina Sidonia obtained the command of the fleet, being advanced to that honour, more from the splendour of his family than from any other cause; and under him, the chief nobles of Spain, and many of distinguished families, served as supernumeraries at their own charge; not solely with so great a thirst of booty, but also with an equal reliance on and assurance of it.

It is the general and stedfast belief, that all the honours, all the lands, all the merchants' warehouses, were divided by anticipation: assuredly

halters and many instruments of death or slavery are seen amongst the spoils, which were prepared for the conquered, placing an assured reliance on the favourable termination of the expedition.

When spring was far advanced, the rendezvous was at Lisbon; from whence three ships, on their passage to a port of Galicia, are lost to the fleet, which a violent tempest had, and in part the rowers, having recovered their liberty, in consequence of the confusion, attendant upon the tempest, drove on the French coast.

In the mean time, the Prince of Parma, to whom the chief command of the expedition was intrusted, was in Flanders, with more than thirty thousand men, horse and foot, having excavated dykes, by which the maritime towns might receive from the interior, all supplies of men, stores, and provisions.

The Prince had brought thither eight-and-twenty guardships, about four hundred flat-bottomed vessels, in order that they might without injury be brought close to the shore; part of which were bought and part built, without any intermission of nights or days; and rafts, for the transporting of horses and soldiers, the transporting of which across the channel was to be attempted, at the very time that the Spanish fleet entered the narrow seas.

But the preparations through England and Holland to resist the peril of this violently approaching war, were by no means adequate to the menace of such a torrent; relying that storms or adverse

events at sea might beat them back, or that ships of so stupendous a size would never hazard themselves in the dangers of the navigation of their narrow seas.

Indeed many affirmed, that the ships having returned from India, the convoys of them were laid up in ordinary, although the King of France had communicated to the Queen, that the strength of the fleet and designs of the enemy were accurately ascertained: in such a manner did they permit themselves to be imposed upon by rumours and wild conjectures, that the magnitude of the danger was not understood, until after they had escaped it.

However, the Dutch did muster their ships and sailors, which were in readiness, and also those which were in the employment of individuals; they afterwards blockaded, with a small fleet, the ports of Flanders, to prevent the Prince of Parma from coming out; in other points effecting themselves almost secure.

The Queen, who hitherto had been imposed upon by parleys of peace, with difficulty, even late, permitted herself to confine all those who had become objects of suspicion, on account of innovations in religion, in islands and fenny places. The Queen lines both banks of the Thames, where the descent was expected, with horse and irregular infantry: she reviews and harangues the well-looking multitude, but if they should come to

action, by no means equal to the veteran and hardy soldiers of the Prince of Parma.

There were not in the mean time wanting persons, who compared to her Tomyris, and the queens of the Amazons, and Boadicea, in England itself, and who attributed to her all that became women; or that fables contained in their praise.

The Queen distributed the fleet, to which she added the ships of private people, in this manner: the smaller ships, under the command of Seymour, in the narrow seas and at the mouth of the Thames; the greater ships, a hundred in number, were to be stationed at Plymouth; from which port, at the instant of necessity, they might attack the enemy. Charles Howard had the chief command; Sir Francis Drake was second; the naval victories he had obtained in every quarter of the globe, had rendered him illustrious; and most worthy indeed was he, to whose naval conduct his country, in the very hour of the greatest danger, directed its anxious eyes.

The enemy's fleet was not far distant from England, when the Queen, who had been deceived by rumours, spread abroad expressly for the purposes of deception, informs Howard by letters, that she was informed and convinced, that the fleet was not about to come, or to be detained for a very long time; therefore she orders the disarming of the greatest vessels. Scarcely was this order

obeyed, when the enemy's fleet appears in sight : Howard had the greatest difficulty in collecting the dispersed crews, who had thought themselves disbanded.

The Spaniards did not commit a less error, that they did not instantly rush on, when they might have attacked the English unprepared; in which case, beyond all doubt, England would have been in the greatest danger: but those leaders who were made prisoners, having been reproached with this folly, by which the success of the expedition was hazarded, alleged the most precise orders and directions, which, as is generally the case, are fatal to unexpected occurrences: for Philip was unwilling to expose his fleet to an action with that of the English, before the Prince of Parma might, by setting sail and entering the seas, increase the terror in a twofold proportion. But Seymour and the Dutch fleet detained him closely blockaded at Dunkirk, nor did he venture to break through with his smaller ships; nor was the Spanish fleet, although it might in a great degree have avoided the destruction which followed, able to draw so near the shore, thickly studded with shallows, as to drive off from the blockade the much lighter vessels of the enemy. That moment was of the last consequence in these affairs: what indeed no one apprehended, yet as by an universal fatal blindness, it so occurred, that the Spaniards neglected to bring with them many

things indispensable for the fleet, expecting to receive them from the Prince of Parma.

Moreover, many of his ships were short, in a great degree, of their complement of men; the cause of which, besides the known avarice of the admiral, was, that in those cities of Brabant subject to his control, there were but few sailors; nor indeed could the cities of the Baltic supply the desired numbers; and those, who were forced on board against their will, by the Spaniards, reduced their numbers by flight.

The English, in the mean time, having collected their scattered fleet, stretched out as far as the Land's End, beating up against a wind almost in their teeth, that they might incessantly, at a distance, harass the enemy; in which sort of warfare, it was very evident which construction of ships was the most eligible for the contest, the greater or the more light. For the English ships, not by any means equal in size to the Spanish, but more manageable, got the wind of the enemy, that, whenever they might be driven by the violence of the wind, they might, notwithstanding, wear ship, so obedient were the ships to the helmsman: even when, with a change of wind, they were driven on the enemy's fleet, they avoided it, by their expert manœuvres.

In the prevalence of a calm, which afforded every facility to the rowers of the enemy, not single balls only, but chain-shot, were fitted, which

being scattered, broke and destroyed the shrouds and oars : but the Spaniards had neither the ability of quick pursuit, nor the intention, if occasion offered, of coming to action, as if they were reserved for greater uses.

A long line of ships, extended wings, slow in its approach, and the wounds they inflicted, by this the more certain.

When the attack was most heavy, they then contracted themselves into a half-moon, and their progress was limited to the smaller sails, that one ship might not irregularly precede the other; nor was this mode of advance proved to be sufficiently safe, so often as any confusion might arise from ships pressing upon and dashing against each other: the which happened to Baldez, whom the siege of Leyden had rendered famous; for the ship Hispalia under his command, with eight hundred men on board, is driven against another with that force, that the fleet was constrained to leave her astern, with her mast fallen by the board, that the advance of the whole might not be obstructed by this one, which struck to Sir Francis Drake, who had surrounded her. It now became the contest between the conquerors and conquered; clemency on one part, and adulation on the other. At the same instant the first of the Spanish ships took fire: she was commanded by Michael Oquendo: there are some who say, that being by birth a Dutchman, either mindful of his

country, or angered at seeing himself suspected, that having brought fire to combustible materials, he leaped into and drowned himself in the sea: few of the crew escaped: the lower part of the ship, which the fire had not reached; was taken possession of by the English. Soon after the Spaniards had to lament the loss of the ship Veneta, and other smaller ones.

In the mean time, the British fleet, increased by fresh ships, and by the concourse of nobility which emulously contested for the favour of the Queen, was divided into several divisions; and thus by continued attacks, the enemy being surrounded, harassed their ships.

But now the scarcity of gunpowder began heavily to be felt by the English, by the want of which they were henceforward most extremely circumscribed in their attacks. It was sought for, as far as Holland, without a supply from whence England was then unable to defend herself.

The distant fight continued without interruption for eight days, for the English avoided a close fight, their sailors and soldiers being fewer in number. The fleets drew near the Straits of Dover early in August. Here the fleets of England, which hitherto have been acting separate, now joined, the sailors and soldiers of which amounted to about eleven thousand: the Dutch fleet was left on the coast of Flanders.

The Spaniards expected to be joined here by

the Prince of Parma, and with him the lighter vessels, and cast anchor off Calais. In the mean time, the Prince of Parma was hurrying from temple to temple to offer up his vows, as those do, who are frantic, and devoid of hope and discretion.

Those nobles who had been sent to Flanders from the fleet, to consult on the commonweal, their return being prevented, avoided that destruction which happened to many.

For, by the order of the Queen, who entertained no fear of the enemy, when the moon was first in the wane, a dark night being selected, the Spanish fleet, the night after its anchorage off Calais, was assailed in this manner: the English, with a favourable wind and current, sent forth against the enemy eight ships filled with engines containing stones and gunpowder, and whatever else nourishes and scatters abroad fire. But the Spaniards having cut their cables, stretch out to sea, urged by the apprehensions of the flames communicating to them, for they beheld them driving towards their fleet, and saw the sea far and wide illumined therewith. At this fearful moment, and in the confusion resulting from the necessity of quickly avoiding the flames, Hugh Moncade, who commanded a first rate, which was entangled by the cables of another ship, from which, with the loss of the rudder, the tide and wind being together, he ran her on the shallows

of the French coast, and there the crew (for besides the rowers there were four hundred sailors) kept the English, who were scaling the ship, engaged in fight, whilst they hope for assistance from the continent, until, by the death of the captain and very many others, the ship is taken and plundered for three whole hours.. But the Governor of Calais would not suffer her to be set fire to, that he might preserve the appearance of friendship to the King of Spain, not as yet a declared enemy to France, although it was thought that he had a design upon the very town of Calais. Fifty thousand golden ducats of the King's treasury are got possession of, three hundred rowers are set at liberty, some few of the marines escaped by swimming, being the first messengers to Spain of the disastrous issue of the expedition.

Discomfited by this terror, the fleet is brought up against Gravelines, the nearest town of Flanders, and however much shattered by the ordnance and engines of war of the English, yet were not so reduced, as to cause them to break their ranks.

In this action chiefly were the affairs of the Spaniards broken and brought to great straits; for some ships battered by the shots, because the shot-holes between wind and water could not be filled, nor the rushing waters be pumped out, yielded to the overpowering waves. During the

action, whilst the leaders on board one of the ships are disagreeing between counsels dictated by valour and necessity, to such a length, as to menace each other with instant death, the sea on the sudden swallows the ship up.

The shores of Zealand received two Lusitanian ships, borne away off the Wiling; for the violence of the wind had driven them hither, in vain striving to regain the Straits. The one bore the name of Philip, the other of Matthias; the Flushing men seized the former, some of the officers having escaped in their boats, the captain of her, scorning to fly and to escape in a cock-boat, for a long time bore the fire of the enemy, and lost many of his men; at length he surrendered to the honour and power of Peter Doza, who, commanding a division of the Dutch fleet, places in the cathedral of Leyden the acquired colours, an ostentation of unexampled magnitude. Every thing that was of use in these two ships being removed, the sea overwhelmed their neglected and ruined hulls. Now the Dutch and Frieslanders learned that the whole fleet of the enemy coasts their shores, they know no other fear than that of the enemy's fleet entering the mouth of the Maese, they hasten to remove the buoys, from the sight of which navigators are instructed to avoid the dangerous places of the entrance.

The Spanish admiral, harassed by so many mis-

fortunes, and all moreover throwing the whole of the blame on the Prince of Parma, began to consider of their departure, although it appeared that even this difficulty was not to be overcome but by great danger ; for in the rear the narrow seas were beset closely ; what alone remained, was to go North about of the island, where the ocean is most boisterous, and is scarcely ventured upon with impunity. If the Spaniards had then been closely pressed, so great a dread of the sea and of the enemy had then taken possession of them, that it is delivered down to us, that Medina Sidonia then had it in contemplation to surrender the fleet, covenanting for their lives.

But the English, contenting themselves with watching their course, lest they should attack Scotland or the coasts of Jutland, when it was sufficiently apparent that this was not their design, and that their sole desire was to look for safety in flight through this immense sea, the English were unwilling, in the pursuit of others, to expose themselves to the same danger, contented with the glorious honour resulting from the defeat of the enemy's fleet, and their country saved. Even had their desire of pursuing the enemy been ever so great, the absolute want of gunpowder, which I have above reported, forbade the pursuit.

But they very soon detached Seymour, that, conjointly with the Dutch fleet, he might resist the endeavours of the Prince of Parma. The

remainder of the English fleet, a long while buffeted about by the violence of the tempest, with great difficulty effected their return to England.

No doubt the good fortune and the valour of the English have on this occasion equalled the glory of the Greeks and Romans, who formerly asserted their country's cause in naval engagements: although the English slowly but surely conquered, they never in the whole course of the successive actions came to a close engagement. This, of itself, rendered the event more memorable; they did not lose a vessel of any consequence, and neither by the sea nor in the fight did they lose more than a hundred men.

In the mean time every species of distress and wretchedness overpowered the Spaniards; about five thousand men lost, and the greatest of their ships; the survivors were mostly sick or wounded, and wanting every thing, they were tossed to and fro in the most tempestuous sea. Horses, cattle, baggage, thrown overboard, in order to lighten the ships, the better to enable them to resist the overwhelming waves. Carried amidst the Orcades and the other islands of that sea, Medina Sidonia directs the helmsman to steer for the ports of Spain. He with some few ships which were in better state than others, stretches out into the main ocean; the rest part company not far from Ireland. There were some, which from the tempests constantly shifting their direction, driven

back into the interior seas, were carried on the coasts of England and France. The craggy shores of Norway, and uncertain currents, dashed many on hidden rocks. Another portion of the fleet the storm hurries away to the farthest north, and to a world to that time unknown.

The King of Scotland observes the laws of peace to those who were cast away on his coasts. Thirty-two ships strike on the shallows of the coast of Ireland, or are sunk in the nearest sea, and the crews striving to climb over the rocks, are killed by the inhabitants, because their numbers were greater than it would have been safe to have had pity of. The anger of Providence has pursued the remainder even to their own country, for in the port itself a fire has utterly consumed two ; other accidents have completed the destruction of others. All together, thirty have escaped all perils ; they were store-ships ; and one, out of the numbers of the ships of war, which carried the admiral of that fleet, a little while since so immense in numbers and in size.

Many of the leaders, and the greater part of the crews, died soon after their return, whether from diseases acquired in so severe a navigation, or whether the despondence of their minds brought them to their graves ; whilst, according to the custom of rulers, they call what fortune has perverted, remissness and guilt of those, to whom the execution was intrusted.

























































































































































